



Holly Joy Penzenstadler, Director of Youth Ministry
 hollyjoy@saintrich.org St. Richard Parish 724.444.1971 x128

The Need

Early adolescence is a very critical and difficult time in a person's life. The operative word in early adolescence is "change," and lots of it!

Educators, psychologists, and youth ministers have stated that middle school might be the last great opportunity we have to positively impact and assist a child in his or her educational, spiritual, emotional, and social development.

Middle school adolescents are trying to figure out who they are and what they believe. They are struggling to put the pieces of their life's puzzle together.

It is during this "doubting Thomas phase" that many youngsters become leery of their faith, and begin to question as well as doubt what they believed as children.

Those who minister to middle school youth are in the seed-planting business. They are working with kids who still have many significant and important decisions ahead of them, and the ministering adult has the opportunity to plant the seeds of Jesus' love, hope, and peace in the middle school child.

The EDGE provides an unparalleled moment in the life of a middle school youngster to offer guidance, reassurance, and

Jesus' love to a group of people who have so many options and choices before them.

Parental Responsibility

Parental involvement is imperative. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus scolded his disciples and told them: "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them"

Proverbs 22:6 states, "train a child in the way they should go; and even when they are old, they will not swerve from it." The faith foundation a parent gives a child continues for a lifetime. Middle school is not the time to give your child the option of going to mass. It can create a poor standard of expectation.

The EDGE meets at least once a month. Nowhere else in your child's daily life will there be an invitation and challenge to develop a deeper relationship with Jesus and the Catholic Church than at The EDGE.

Good and loving Creator,
you are the author of all that is good and holy.

We ask you to send your Holy Spirit
upon our middle school youth
and bless them with your patience,
inspire them with your joy,
and nurture them with your compassion.

In their journey to follow Jesus,
encourage them with holiness and peace.

In times of confusion and uncertainty,
guide them with your wisdom and truth.

May they always look to you
for strength and guidance.

We also ask you to send your blessing upon

The EDGE,

allow it to always be a source of inspiration,
acceptance, and love.

May all those who minister in The EDGE
walk always in the light of Christ
and bring our young people ever closer
to your son Jesus.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.